



MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION SEPTEMBER 5, 2013

RHODE ISLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION

The fifth work session of the Rhode Island Board of Education was held on Thursday, September 5th, 2013, at the Department of Education, Room 501, 255 Westminster Street, Providence 02903. Chair Eva-Marie Mancuso welcomed everyone, declared a quorum present, and called the work session to order at 4:03 p.m.

Present: Eva-Marie Mancuso, Antonio Barajas, Michael Bernstein, Colleen A. Callahan, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Michael A. Grande, Patrick A. Guida, and Mathies Santos. Lawrence Purtill arrived after the start of the work session.

Absent: William C. Maaia.

1. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA

On a motion duly made by Jo Eva Gaines and seconded by Colleen Callahan, it was

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Board of Education accepts the agenda for the work session of September 5, 2013.

Vote: 9 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Eva-Marie Mancuso, Antonio Barajas, Michael Bernstein, Colleen A. Callahan, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Michael A. Grande, Patrick A. Guida, and Mathies Santos.

NAYS: 0

2. DISCUSSION ITEMS

Chair Mancuso called upon President David Dooley to present Items 2i-2l so that President Dooley could depart the work session for another engagement.

Item 2i, Tenure for URI's Vice-President for Research & Econ. Development

President Dooley noted that Gary Sonnenfeld, whom the Board of Education appointed as Vice-President for Research and Economic Development at the University of Rhode Island at the Board's special meeting on August 14th, has been recommended to receive tenure at URI. President Dooley said that Dr. Sonnenfeld is an excellent candidate for tenure and that he will be asking for the Board's approval on Monday for URI to award that tenure.

Item 2j, Revised Resolution regarding URI's Facility Clearance

President Dooley explained that URI is required to obtain security clearance for various key personnel pertaining to research contracts. The changes in the resolution reflect the removal of Ray Di Pasquale and addition of Clark Greene to the list of management personnel, as well as the removal of the exclusion of classified information for Chair Mancuso that had temporarily been added during her (now complete) background check and Department of Defense security clearance.

Item 2k, Uniform Real Estate License Agreement for the Re-establishment of a House for URI's Delta Sigma Chapter

It is standard for chapters to build homes on URI property, President Dooley explained, and the Delta Sigma Chapter, which has been present on campus for many years, now seeks to re-establish a house on campus.

Item 2l, Vice-President, Administration and Finance at URI

President Dooley indicated that URI conducted and completed its second vice-presidential search this year, and the University is pleased to recruit Ms. Valentino as Vice-President for Administration and Finance.

Michael Grande noted that Ms. Valentino's CV is overly impressive but does not reflect education in that area. President Dooley said that a bachelor's degree does meet the job requirements and that he is confident that Ms. Valentino meets or exceeds the job requirements for this position.

Jo Eva Gaines asked what type of certificate Ms. Valentino holds (listed under "education" on her CV), and President Dooley indicated that he will provide that information for Monday's meeting.

Item 2a - Legislative Report for Elementary, Secondary & Higher Education

Andy Andrade presented the elementary and secondary education legislative report, noting that there were 191 bills tracked in this year's legislative session, which affected education in some way.

Colleen Callahan asked how the Board would be engaged in the process of developing legislation methodology to determine a position on each proposed bill.

Patrick Guida explained that historically, the Board of Regents had a legislative committee, but as legislation can come up quickly, it posed a challenge to oppose or support legislation. He suggested that the Board receive periodic recommendations from staff. Mr. Andrade indicated that he will bring next year's suggestions to the Board before moving forward and will include recommendations on how to proceed.

Michael Trainor provided the legislative report for higher education, noting that higher education worked with the Governor's office and Chair Mancuso to monitor, track, and consult on key legislation. Among the pieces of legislation that passed were a statutory process for the closing of proprietary schools and a requirement that all higher education employees and their

beneficiaries who receive a tuition waiver consent to public disclosure about the waiver. A Senate resolution asked the Office of Higher Education to better coordinate college completion, with a report to the legislature by January 1, 2014, and the Senate also requested that the Board of Education review transfers between the three public higher education institutions.

Chair Mancuso noted that the nursing facility was also named in a resolution during the legislative session.

Item 2c - RIDE Operating Budget – FY 2015

Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education Deborah A. Gist explained that this day the first of several discussions on RIDE's operating budget would take place. There are three budgets: the 2014 supplemental budget, the constrained 2015 budget with a 7% reduction, and a 2015 budget at current-service level. Although the budget is due 10/1, the State Budget Office understands that the Board will not vote on the budget until its 10/7 meeting.

Mr. Dunham presented the RIDE budgets, explaining that the budgets include education aid, housing aid, salaries and benefits, student services, and formula funding. The 2014 supplemental budget has no additional funds. The 2015 current-service level budget has to account for salary, wage, and funding formula increases. Because the majority of the budget is held harmless, the budget is really about \$20 million out of more than \$1 billion.

Chair Mancuso asked Mr. Dunham to clarify how much money, without the pass-throughs, actually runs RIDE. Mr. Dunham indicated that he agreed with the \$19.8-million figure, but also said that this figure includes some funds distributed to other agencies, some of which are subject to the 7% reduction.

Item 2f - Recommendation of new members to the RI School for the Deaf Board of Trustees

Commissioner Gist presented four nominations for the School for the Deaf, two of whom are deaf or hard of hearing. The nominees have been vetted, and their leadership, strength, and commitment have been confirmed. The outgoing chair will still serve on the board because there are multiple vacancies, but he and two others will be stepping down, and the School for the Deaf will still need to continue filling positions. At least five of the board's nine members must be deaf or hard of hearing, per state statute.

Lawrence Purtill requested that Board members receive a statement from candidates in order to provide more detail on their vision for the school, and Mathies Santos agreed that it would be helpful. Chair Mancuso stated that it would not be excessive to request a brief paragraph from each nominee by Monday night's Board meeting, perhaps asking why he or she wishes to serve on the school's board.

Item 2h - Higher Education Capital Budget – FY 2015

Susan LaPanne provided a PowerPoint and hard-copy description of 65 capital projects. Of the 65 capital projects, 36 are in process and 15 or 16 need to be reviewed by the Board and either rejected or approved. Colleen Callahan asked if only new projects need Board approval, and Associate Commissioner LaPanne answered that some continuous projects also need Board approval.

Robert Weygand informed the Board that the Hellenic Center project will be eliminated from URI's capital improvement plan, and Associate Commissioner LaPanne added that a dormitory project at CCRI will be eliminated as well. The plan that the Board will be asked to approve in October will not include either project.

Michael Grande asked if the University Inn will have guarantees by the Board/URI for third-party funding. Mr. Weygand said an RFP is being developed now, with no money or guarantees from the Board for the physical construction.

Michael Bernstein asked if URI is considering a new Student Union, and Mr. Weygand said the new Wellness Center serves students in their residential core, and the new University Inn includes an admission/welcome center and bookstore.

Item 2d - Revisions to the RI Educator Preparation Standards – Request for Public Comment

Commissioner Gist said this area is ripe for improvement. The 2009 strategic plan, regarding educator excellence, revised program approval standards and linked them with teaching.

Ms. Snider guided board members to the graphic in their packets, created by Angela Minnici. Director of Educator Quality and Certification Lisa Foehr said that students in educator programs are taught to teach to standards, and schools then use those standards for evaluations.

Chair Mancuso asked if the standards address diversity, and Ms. Foehr said both past and present sets of standards addressed diversity. Ms. Snider added that RIDE is partnering with institutions to further address diversity.

Colleen Callahan asked if there is a place for clinical partnerships to identify potential teachers in diverse areas. Ms. Snider said that most of the teaching force is trained in Rhode Island from various communities, and conversations continue to address this issue.

Patrick Guida asked whether recommendations in the NASBE and CSSO reports were incorporated, and Ms. Foehr said that they were.

Mathies Santos said there had been an exchange program in the 1970s between Rhode Island College and historically black colleges and asked if a similar idea could be looked at for teacher preparation.

Jo Eva Gaines asked if we have statements but no plan, and Ms. Foehr responded that RIDE reviews are ongoing. Chair Mancuso added that reviews and strategies will be better now that we have data.

Antonio Barajas said there does not seem to have been great progress in recruiting and retaining minorities and asked if there are objectives, such as attracting and/or retaining a certain percentage a year. Chair Mancuso suggested including that issue in the Board's goals.

Item 2e - Special Education Regulations – Feedback from Public Comment

Commissioner Gist said these regulations are basically technical revisions. They went out for public comment and none was received, and the Board will now be asked to approve them on Monday.

Item 2g - Status Update on Growth Model and Evaluations

Commissioner Gist said that the R.I. Department of (Elementary and Secondary) Education (RIDE) notified districts to use growth scores this year, but the scores are not a factor in teacher ratings. RIDE is talking with the U.S. Department of Education on carrying out revisions to the system. RIDE would expect to pursue a waiver for Rhode Island from the No Child Left Behind Act; flexibility from eligibility or an amendment to the waiver; and/or a potential Race to the Top waiver.

Patrick Guida asked about a timeline to engage with the U.S. Dept. of Education, and Commissioner Gist responded that the requirement for flexibility would include a timeline and that RIDE should hear by September 30th.

Item 2b - Feedback on Board Retreat and Governance Structure

Clark Greene introduced and explained two documents distributed to Board members at the work session: goals for consideration and a process for the restructure.

The Board will review and provide input on these documents until its members agree on basic, broad goals, which will then go to the Executive Committee. Suggestions include completions, including broadening certification programs and expanding the joint admissions agreement; helping students obtain degrees in a timely manner; and workforce connections (internships, research funding, etc.).

Colleen Callahan stated that the two draft documents appear to focus almost exclusively on higher education, and Chair Mancuso indicated that the focus must be on how higher education fits into legislative changes, as the system is under a deadline to present a plan. A future master strategic plan will encompass the full K-20 system.

Michael Grande asked how informed Governor Chafee and the General Assembly are of the Board's status on the higher education plan. Chair Mancuso indicated that both parties understand the constraints on the Board, including how the Board was not fully appointed until March of this year.

Clark Greene explained that the Executive Committee will work on a report with consultants in September to address goals. Meetings will be held with stakeholders, and those results will be brought to the Board for review and finalization at the Board's November meeting. Mr. Greene indicated that Board members will see a draft report if they wish, but will also benefit from seeing a report that incorporates stakeholders' comments. When the Board votes on November 13th on a final draft, the report will be sent to the General Assembly. There will be a process for public input incorporating forums at the institutions and possibly at Bryant University. On December 9th, the Board will vote on a proposal for the legislative packet.

Patrick Guida asked if the General Assembly is being engaged now or only when in legislative session, and Mr. Greene indicated that the system has representatives to keep in touch year-round.

Colleen Callahan asked about a joint K-16 office, and Chair Mancuso responded that this is one item the Board will be discussing during this process. The Board can start with goals, and then the structure will fall into place.

Michael Bernstein asked if the Board or the General Assembly will make the final decisions, and Mr. Greene responded that the Board has to present the goals and plan to the General Assembly.

Jo Eva Gaines indicated that that the chart is missing issues, such as career readiness for youths who do not enter higher education, and Chair Mancuso responded that the chart includes impact areas.

3. NEXT MEETING

Monday, September 9th, 5:30 p.m. at Rhode Island School for the Deaf, Providence

4. ADJOURNMENT:

On a motion duly made by Karin Forbes and seconded by Colleen Callahan, it was

VOTED: That the work session of the Rhode Island Board of Education adjourns.

Vote: 10 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Eva-Marie Mancuso, Antonio Barajas, Michael Bernstein, Colleen Callahan, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Michael Grande, Patrick Guida, Lawrence Purtill, and Mathies Santos.

NAYS: 0

The work session adjourned at 6:21 p.m.